

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Goals</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Assumptions</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Major Strategies</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Shaping City Character</b>	<b>6</b>
Findings 1-11	6
Obj. 1: Encourage protection, preservation, and regeneration of the city's open space and natural resources. (7 policies)	7
Obj. 2: Expand physical and visual access to the River. (3 policies)	9
Obj. 3: Develop park and open space connections. (3 policies)	9
Obj. 4: Fulfill park development priorities. (3 policies)	10
Obj. 5: Enhance the City and its neighborhoods. (4 policies)	11
Obj. 6: Foster the economic development potential of the City's park and recreation system. (7 policies)	12
<b>Building Community</b>	<b>13</b>
Findings 1-7	13
Obj. 7: Encourage enforcement and operational efforts which promote safe and secure access to and use of parks. (3 policies)	14
Obj. 8: Provide recreation facilities and programming that contributes to stable neighborhoods. (4 policies)	15
Obj. 9: Identify and remove barriers to participation. (7 policies)	16
Obj. 10: Foster opportunities for on-going community and citizen involvement and feedback. (1 policy)	17
Obj. 11: Promote cultural awareness. (4 policies)	17
<b>Innovative Focusing of Resources</b>	<b>18</b>
Findings 1-9	18
Obj. 12: Establish priorities for use and distribution of city resources. (5 policies)	19
Obj. 13: Increase utilization of supplemental resources. (2 policies)	20
Obj. 14: Improve utilization of human resources. (4 policies)	20
Obj. 15: Improve management of resources. (4 policies)	21
<b>Implementation</b>	<b>22</b>
2005-2009 Action Plan	
Action Steps for 2005	23
Action Steps for 2006	35
Action Steps for 2007	40
Action Steps for 2008	44
Action Steps for 2009	46
<b>Credits</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Appendix I</b>	<b>49</b>
Parks and Recreation Map	
<b>Appendix II</b>	<b>50</b>
Recreation Center Amenities	
<b>Appendix III</b>	<b>51</b>
Trail System Policy 11	

# INTRODUCTION



Bicycling in Harriet Island Regional Park

The Parks and Recreation Plan, a chapter of the City's Comprehensive Plan, is a statement of official city policy to guide park and recreation development, operations, and maintenance activities. The plan provides a comprehensive framework for meeting the needs, challenges, and opportunities confronting the City's parks and recreation system. This is one of several elements that comprise Saint Paul's Comprehensive Plan. While most of the policies in this plan relate specifically to the park and recreation system, they may influence - or be influenced by - policies contained in other comprehensive plan elements.

The new plan was undertaken at the request of the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Commission, to update the existing plan that was adopted in 1985. In requesting the new plan, the Parks Commission was interested in addressing a broader range of issues than those covered in the 1985 plan which focused on delivery of recreational services in response to significant budget reductions.

In March 1992, the Parks Commission appointed the Park Planning Task Force to work with Park and Recreation Division and Planning Division staff to update the plan. The task force was comprised of representatives from both the Parks and Planning Commission, as well as citizens with various interests and backgrounds related to parks and recreation. The task force held monthly public meetings to garner public input on issues to be addressed in the new plan. The update was completed in 2002.



Upper Harbor Marina

## GOALS

Through a process of community input, several goals were defined to help guide new park and recreation policy and shape a broad vision of what Saint Paul's park and recreation system can and should strive to be:

- **RESPONSIVE PARK AND RECREATION SERVICES.**

The recreational needs and expectations of Saint Paul residents are widely varied and subject to change. This is due in part to Saint Paul's population becoming more racially and culturally diverse and the increased rate at which recreation trends change. The Parks and Recreation Division must strive to deliver services in a flexible manner which allows timely response to unforeseen needs, trends, and opportunities. The Division must also position itself to effectively anticipate needs, trends and opportunities.

- **SAFE, ATTRACTIVE, AND ACCESSIBLE PARK AND RECREATION FACILITIES.**

The City must ensure that park and recreation facilities remain safe, attractive, and accessible through effective design, maintenance, and staffing. It is also important to recognize that safety issues extend beyond park boundaries; access to and from park and recreation facilities must also be safe. The Parks Division, the Police Department and community groups must closely coordinate efforts to keep parks and neighborhoods, safe and attractive, and to ensure all members of our community have access to recreation opportunities.

- **PARKS WHICH ENHANCE NEIGHBORHOOD STABILITY AND COHESIVENESS.**

Stable and cohesive neighborhoods, long a trademark of Saint Paul, are being threatened by increased poverty, social isolation, racial tensions, and fear for personal safety. The Parks Commission, in their report, *Neighborhoods In Transition*, concluded that recreation centers, and parks in general, can play a vital role in neighborhood stabilization and community building efforts. The City must strive to strengthen community involvement and build social networks to reinforce parks and recreation centers as focal points of neighborhood interaction, security, and pride.

- **BALANCED PARK DEVELOPMENT.**

Protecting open space and natural resources and accommodating recreation demands are two of the Division's highest responsibilities. Both are essential to our high quality parks and recreation system. However, as demand for recreation opportunities increases, so does the potential to impact the City's natural environment. To protect and preserve significant natural resources in our efforts to meet recreational demands, we must understand how recreational uses and park development affect the natural environment and determine how human activity and access should be managed to achieve and maintain a balanced system.



***“Blooming Saint Paul”***

***Citywide***

***Parks and Recreation***

***Landscaping Program***

## ASSUMPTIONS

This plan is based on several assumptions about our future challenges:

- **INCREASINGLY DIVERSE POPULATION, NEEDS, AND DEMANDS.**

The City's changing and increasingly diverse population presents significant challenges regarding demand and delivery of recreation opportunities. There is growing demand for recreation opportunities to accommodate all ages and genders. Our increasing ethnicity provides opportunities to expand cultural awareness, but also presents a challenge to overcome language and racial barriers. The population generally has become more health conscious and environmentally aware, which has led to an increased interest in recreation for exercise and recreation opportunities that allow interaction with the natural environment. This diversity of interests and demands reflects a significant broadening of the traditional scope of recreation provided in past decades which concentrated on boys athletics. The city's population is expected to become increasingly diverse. Likewise, demand for recreation will likely increase and diversify. To respond, the Parks and Recreation Division will need to become more inclusive and continually assess who they are serving, what their needs are, and how best to meet their needs.

- **HIGHER EXPECTATIONS OF PUBLIC SERVICE.**

Many adults today grew up with programmed recreation and continue to expect services for themselves, and their children. With more discretionary time and resources to spend on leisure activities and an expanded spectrum of recreation opportunities, demand for recreation has grown. At the same time, hectic schedules, family obligations, and travel costs have resulted in demand for more flexible and convenient recreation opportunities. Faced with limited resources, our response to demands must be based on a careful assessment and prioritization of the broader needs of all city residents. We must continue to seek opportunities to become more flexible through coordination and partnerships within the Division, with other City departments and with other recreation providers.

- **LIMITED PHYSICAL EXPANSION OF THE PARK AND RECREATION SYSTEM.**

Historical development patterns have resulted in the existing--somewhat uneven--distribution of park and recreation facilities. However, limited City funds and limited available land restrict our ability to develop new park and recreation facilities. Faced with limited resources, the City may not be able to meet all demands for additional facilities and/or services. To that extent, it will become increasingly important for the Division to explore non-traditional approaches and engage in partnerships with other organizations to ensure that all recreational resources within the city, whether public or private, are efficiently and effectively utilized and park and recreation opportunities are readily accessible to all Saint Paul residents.

- **BUDGET LIMITATIONS AND POTENTIAL REDUCTIONS.**

Funding for parks and recreation has decreased at regional, state, and federal levels over the past decade. While local funding has remained relatively constant, increased public demand for new facilities, services, and replacement or rehabilitation of aging facilities have contributed to increased funding demands. Maintenance and operating costs have also increased due to construction of larger buildings, deterioration of aging buildings, use of outdated vehicles and equipment, and acquisition of more parkland. While the City has been consistently responsive to demands for new facilities, funding to ensure that facilities are fully utilized and properly maintained has often fallen short. The City has a substantial investment in its park and recreation system and must recognize its responsibility to maintain and enhance the system for present and future use. The availability of resources to operate and maintain the park and recreation system will continue to be subject to economic fluctuations and budget cutbacks. To ensure the high quality of our park and recreation facilities and services we must acknowledge their value and make a commitment to sustain them.



## MAJOR STRATEGIES

The Plan proposes three strategies to guide future development, operations and maintenance of the Saint Paul parks and recreation system:

### ► SHAPING CITY CHARACTER

This strategy recognizes that parks, parkways, and natural and historic features lend form, character, and identity which enhance the city and it's neighborhoods. It also recognizes that the existing system of parks, parkways, and natural and historic resources provides a strong framework to build on. The policies in this strategy focus on preservation, maintenance and development of the park and recreation system and the city's natural and historic resources.

### ► BUILDING COMMUNITY

This strategy recognizes that parks and recreation facilities function as neighborhood focal points, not just physically and aesthetically, but also as the center of community activity and life. Policies in this strategy focus on strengthening the role of parks and recreation facilities by making sure they are safe, accessible, and responsive to community needs, and by providing opportunities to bring people together, foster community involvement, and build a community support system.

### ► INNOVATIVE FOCUSING OF RESOURCES

This strategy recognizes that budgets are limited and resources must be carefully managed to improve efficiency and effectiveness. It also recognizes the need to explore ways to stretch existing resources, identify new resources, and build partnerships. Policies in this strategy focus on setting priorities, and improving utilization and management of resources.



*Japanese Garden*